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ABSTRACT

Dialogue journals, notebooks in which students communicate individually with the teacher on whatever topics they choose, can be both an important way to develop second language ability and a method of integrating language and classroom management. This is particularly true in a multicultural classroom, since the dialogue journals can help the teacher introduce the student to basic classroom practices and maintain an open communication channel without forfeiting valuable class work time. Student journal entries are closely tied to the student's development of language skills and understanding of content, both in the student's comments and in the teacher's responses. They can also assist the teacher in lesson planning and individualizing instruction, provide information about the students' cultures, activities and needs, provide a channel for honest communication, and help resolve difficult classroom situations. (MSE)

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DIALOGUE JOURNALS--AN IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT TOOL IN THE MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM

Leslee Reed and Joy Kreeft Peyton

Each day as my sixth grade students enter the classroom, while I am scurrying around getting ready for the day, the first thing most of them do is pick up their dialogue journals from a table at the front of the room and read my reply to their previous entry. Sometimes they are especially eager to respond and begin writing even before they have removed their jackets. Throughout the school day, the journals remain visible on the students' desks, available for the few moments when an assignment is completed and there is a bit of time to write or when classroom excitement or tensions become so intense that it is necessary to explode in writing. I have found that this written communication is an important way to develop language ability, but it is also much more than that. It is a way to integrate language and classroom management.

Dialogue journals are notebooks in which my students and I write to each other daily--about personal concerns, relationships with classmates, academic topics and activities. Choice of topic for the writing is generally left to the student. The journals are not corrected, but rather I respond as a participant in an ongoing, written conversation (cf. Staton, 1980). During the past several years, dialogue journals have become absolutely central to my teaching and an indispensable aid to classroom management. This is especially true in my

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current teaching situation, an elementary school in Los Angeles, with students from over thirty different language groups. In my classroom of around twenty-five students I usually have students from at least ten countries and language backgrounds. There is a wide spread of proficiency in English, ranging from non-literate in their native language with no oral English proficiency to near native proficiency in English and reading and writing abilities at or close to grade level. Although we attempt to place students in grades according to their age, this is often determined by guesses from friends and relatives, and I invariably have a few students who look much too young or much too old to be in the sixth grade.

While I have always thought that teaching involved a tremendous amount of juggling, I find this to be even more the case in the multicultural classroom. There are the routines of any school day--collecting lunch money, handing out lunch tickets, sending notes home, etc.--and many of my students who have had no exposure to these classroom practices must be introduced to the very basics. At the same time, it is essential that we cover our lesson material so that students do not fall even further behind their grade level. In this kind of classroom effective management is even more crucial than ever before, and I find I do most of my "juggling" in our dialogue journals.

For me, "classroom management" has many facets. Of course, lesson planning and general classroom discipline, usually considered central to classroom management, are essential aspects of teaching. But even more important is maintaining an open channel of communication with students in a context in which their language use and development grows out of their own cultural perspective and their daily experiences with a new culture. Students need the opportunity to express themselves freely about things that interest or concern them, to clarify issues that confuse them, and to reason their way through troubling situations.

Teachers need a way to know how events that occur in the school and at home affect their students and the whole classroom. In a typical school day it is impossible for one teacher to maintain this kind of communication with each student individually. Teachers also need to be able to adapt and expand lessons to meet the wide range of individual needs and skills that are found in one classroom. Dialogue journals provide these opportunities.

As will be evident in the dialogue journal selections presented in this article, the communication that occurs in the journals is inextricably tied to the development of language skills and understanding of content. Researchers and practitioners have discussed the potential of dialogue journal interaction for accomplishing various academic purposes: integrating students from various backgrounds and proficiencies into the American school setting and advancing their chances of success (Cazden, in press; Davis, 1983; Hayes and Bahruth, 1985; Shuy, 1984); integrating reading and writing (Atwell, 1984; Gambrell, 1985; Staton, 1985; Walworth, 1985); and developing writing ability (Kreeft, 1984b; Staton, 1983) and grammatical proficiency in English (Kreeft, 1984a). In the dialogue journal, students have multiple opportunities for reading and writing in English and for building their confidence in expressing themselves in their new language, and the teacher can provide language and cultural support as well as the general academic and social support that all students need. Their attempts are received without criticism and responses are written specifically for them. It is usually not long before even the most reticent student is writing and reading what the teacher has written.

Gifted teachers (Ashton-Warner, 1963, for example) have long understood that the greatest potential for language development exists when participants are focused on something other than language per se. Therefore, it has been fascinating for me to see the relationship between language development and this practice that I use primarily for one purpose--classroom management.

Dialogue journals serve as a classroom management tool in my culturally diverse sixth grade classroom in many ways: as an aid to lesson planning; a way to individualize instruction; a source of information about students' culture, activities, and needs; a private channel for honest communication; and a means for resolving difficult classroom situations.

Since there is no better way to demonstrate these points than through the writing itself, selections from the dialogue journals of my students over the past few years are used to illustrate. These selections are excerpts from longer entries in most cases; otherwise, the writing is unedited.

An aid to lesson planning

Many teachers are concerned about the amount of time it takes to write in dialogue journals every day. It does take time to write, but the journals are actually an essential part of my lesson planning. In the journals I frequently discover students' interests and plan lessons around those interests. For example, this student's interest in our study of atoms and our discussion of them in the journal spurred me to spend more time on the study of atoms in class.

U Chal: Last year in Brazil my science teacher say even if the atoms of one thing are the same atoms of other thing . . . one is different of other because the atoms are in the different places.

Can the man cut the atom in two parts?

If the atoms are made with things smaller than the atoms why they keep saying the atoms the small thing in the world.

What the thing smaller than the atoms is made?

What a atom of Uranion can do?

Teacher: If the atom is cut or smashed we get a mighty release of energy--which is very dangerous unless it is very controlled.

We are learning more about the atom. The atom is the smallest unit of matter. That tiny unit has parts to it that don't separate naturally.

We use uranium atoms in our nuclear power plants.

The same student's questions about a lesson on different kinds of maps gave me the opportunity to clarify information presented in class:

U Chal: How do the boat now what direction he go?

Teacher: The boat uses a compass to know the direction it is going. A long time ago the sailors on boats looked at the stars to tell directions.

U Chal: What map don't have distosan?

Teacher: The best map is the globe. It is too hard to carry--so the best flat map is the equal area map. It shows almost no distortion.

U Chal: If the polar map is disoriation why is good for planes?

Teacher: The polar map has distortion on countries near the equator. For countries near the poles it is very true. You ask a fine question. You are thinking!

Students are encouraged to evaluate and even criticize lessons if they wish, and when they do so, I ask them to be more specific about why they found a lesson dull or boring. This helps them to refine their critical thinking skills and pushes them toward greater clarity of expression. In the entries below, Willie (a native English speaker) made progressively clearer to me his opinion about our study of India.

February 29

I hope we don't keep studying about India to the end of the semester because truthfully I'm getting tired of studying about India every morning. I like studying about it and all but I think we are spending to much time on India and its getting kind of boring although I did like making maps. I think making maps are fun.

April 9

To tell you the truth I'm tired of studying India. It's an interesting country but that's what we usuly do every morning. Now its getting to boring for me. How long are we going to keep up this study.

April 23

Mrs. Reed, I don't mean to insult you but I know I can speak for a good percentage of the class when I say we are a little tired of

India now. We study India about every day at school. It does have its interesting parts but up to a point. We have been doing India for about a month and personaly I hate it now. It was fine for a while but now its pathetic.

He has marshalled all of his argumentative forces to convince me, and also given me the opportunity to explain the reason for our intensive study.

A way to individualize instruction

For dealing with individual differences, the dialogue journal is ideal. In a class where students arrive new to the school and the country throughout the year, even those who are new in class and know very little English can write something. The following entries come from a new student from Vietnam who is extremely shy. Although her English is very limited, another girl in class helps her write every day and read what I write back, and she is gradually gaining in ability to communicate in writing.

Helen: I like you Mrs. reed
Tuyet going to give Lien and I a test tomorrow.
I like to learn English

Teacher: Tuyet can help you to learn English. She can help you to understand the words. Ask her if you need help. . . .

Helen: I like to speak english very well
I like Tuyet
I like Lien
They all nice to me.

Teacher: Helen is nice to Tuyet, Lien and to Mrs. Reed.
Helen is speaking more English everyday.
Today Helen multiplied three numbers by one number.

My language is deliberately very simple, and in my last entry I use her first name, Helen. I frequently do this with new arrivals whose English proficiency is very low; when they see their name written, they are eager to find out what I have written about them.

I have also had students who were identified as educationally handicapped. One had an extremely low I.Q., yet she wrote pages in the journal every day.

Much of what she wrote was highly repetitious, but she was so happy when she was writing. It was a comfort for her to be able to do what other students were doing and feel that we were communicating. Her entries were always difficult to read, but I skimmed them, picked out an idea or two that I could recognize, and responded to those. In the following exchange I realized that she was writing about some important classroom dynamics and some problems with a classmate, Rickie.

Maria: lra (Laura) and me are go to set to geter but some she is mad with rikee and she cris alet bit bcs rikee is reell men to me and lra and evy bity the room. lra toll me to tell you to tell her to stop bothin her. thek you ms. reed. dog are catrs devece was hteg lura and she seed that you cotry is ver agly and she was cring altilbit rikee is hetag evey bity and she dost letl dobity work and she dot lit me work and lowra thot we was so stopet and that wat laura sist to me.

Teacher: Laura is a nice girl and she feels no one likes her. She does not speak English very well and it is hard to talk if you don't speak English so well. She feels so lonely--she needs you to be her friend. You are nice to her and she needs someone to be nice to her.

At the same time, I can push more advanced students to think more deeply about what they have written and to write more about it:

Sonia: We also saw a bunch of bats. They were very ugly. We swam in the Virgin River but it was rushing to much. When we came back we saw a yellow line dividing the sky in half. We saw blue sky and yellow sky.

Teacher: The yellow sky was over the city, wasn't it? What does that tell you about the air?

I've never been to the Virgin River. Is it large? Did you swim in the Colorado River? I did--and do you know what happens when you swim in that river?

Sonia: Yes, the yellow was over the sky. That yellow stuff tells me that people smog up the air. The Virgin River is relly big. In some places its muddy but were we were camping it was clear. It was like a rushing river. I didn't go swimming in the Colorado River. What happens if you swim in the Colorado River?

Teacher: Yes! Smog is just junk in our air.

When you swim in the Colorado River you have to take a shower afterward because your body is covered with silt. (Silt is fine pieces of dirt!). It is really strange because the silt is red colored . . .

I individualize my responses to each student's language level, as it is manifested in their writing. One way to do this is through vocabulary choice. I often try to extend a student's vocabulary by using synonyms of words they use or by using terms that are even a bit more mature than theirs:

Ricardo: At the bottom of my jar the small pebbles are smaller than the top layer but they look the same.

Teacher: Then if there is a layer of smaller particles it is different from a layer of larger particles even if they are the same color.
(Emphasis added.)

My level of questioning also varies in the journals, depending on the ability of the student. One day when an owl was in the news, several students mentioned the owl in their journal entry for that day. Each of my responses is intended to challenge or promote thought at a different level.

To Fernando: The owl's picture and story were fun to see. Do you think the owl is wise?

To Claudia: I've heard people say, "He's as wise as an owl!" I wonder why people say that. Did you think this owl was wise?

To Benny: How do you think the author felt about the owl in that story? Did he write about the owl as though it had human or bird characteristics?

To Nicky: Which of the characteristics of the owl were anthropomorphic and which were avian? Do you think the owl did remember? Is that avian?

A source of information about students' cultures, activities, and needs

The dialogue journal is a rich source of information about students' backgrounds. In response to my question, this student explains the Laotian New Year celebration.

Souphatta: We go to the Laos Church bring food and money and give it to the monk. They'll take the food and money and give it to the poor people. Then we go home and tie our wrist with white yarn. But the older person has to do it this is how to make it. Get a silver pot, rice, flowers, boiled eggs, fruits, and candy. You put the rice in the silver pot then stick the flowers in and cut the white yarn 5" long and hang them on the flowers. After that put the foods around the silver pot then your finish. Let the older person tell you good luck. Then the women in the family cook and the mens fix the table. We cook rice noodle and melt meat put them in hot and spicy sauce. This is called cau poun.

The journal also lets me know when students are frustrated and need help. This student from India shares with me the culture of her country, but at the same time she lets me know how overwhelmed she feels with all of our activities.

Sangeeta: My uncle took the sari because Indian prints are different than we have here. Yes, silk saris are really nice and beautiful my mother had one silk sari that tore so she gave it to me and I always used to wear it and play with it and sometimes I ask her to give me a sari to play with and then I give it back to her.

Boy! we really have to work on things we got to work on our brochure our pictures and write about them in our brochure. We have to work on making the cartoons table cloth its going to be fun isn't it? We have to work on our promotion ceremony . . .

Alerted to a possible problem, I will watch her for the next few days to see if she is in fact overburdened.

Without the journals, I would not know how much each student really comprehends what we do in class. One day a few years ago, during the murders of children in Atlanta, I explained that we would be having a moment of silence for the children. I explained this carefully, and many of the students took part in the discussion. The principal announced the moment of silence on the loud speaker, and we discussed afterward what we had done and why. That day, Michael, from Burma, wrote:

Mrs. Reed today at reading Mr. Avak spook in speaker he said today is a something day and we have to think about something for one minute so I don't know what is that all about so can you tell what is all about please Mrs. Reed?

He didn't understand what we had been doing! If we hadn't had the journals, I would never have known that someone had not understood. In the journal I had a chance to repeat what I had said and make sure that he understood.

When students tell me their need for help or supplies and materials, this helps me not only to know what I need to bring and which students I need to work with, but also to make them aware of the need for specificity and detail. If the request is not specific as to quantity, size, color and amount, I cannot be very helpful and the materials are delayed until the specifications are clarified.

Rudolfo: I need one black, yellow, red, blue, white and brown construction paper not very big just normal size. What we're doing is very interesting.

Teacher: Our normal sizes of paper are: 3 X 5, 8½ X 11, 24 X 18 and 12 X 9. Which normal size do you need? Which thing that we're doing is very interesting?

A private channel for honest communication

Dialogue journals provide a place where students can write freely about topics that interest them without being constrained by grammar rules or a listening participant. Some students who are reluctant to express themselves in class or on class assignments open up in the journal. One student, for example, was obviously overage for elementary school, even though his visa said he was only twelve. He compensated for feeling so out of place by letting his hair grow and hang down over his face and arriving late every morning so he would not have to line up with the others and stand head and shoulders above them. The games the class played embarrassed him so he took his journal outside during recess and

noon play periods and would frequently write about the Vietnamese folktales he had learned from his grandmother. He continued the same story from day to day, with interruptions for daily comments on other things, until he finished it. He was probably reading the stories and able to retell them from memory. He was not copying--I've watched! I've learned so many folk tales from him!

Dien: A friend In Need Is A Friend Indeed.

Duong-Le worked hard and as a result passed his exams and became a mandarin. He then lived in a sumptuous house and was attended upon by many servants, whereas Luu Binh extravagantly spent all his money and ended up in poverty. Destitute and unemployed he thought of Duong-Le. He believed that since he had help his friend when he was poor, his friend would never forget him. Besides, Duong-Le was a very good friend. He said to himself: "If I go to him, he will definitely help me!" continue . . .

Dien: (next day) When Luu Binh came to the mandarin's palace, he was not allowed in immediately. He had to wait outside for a very long time. At last, one of his friends servant came out and took him into a special room. Contrary to his expectations, his friend treated him . . . (and the entry continues)

The privacy of the journal also provides time and a place for discussion of events which are painful--the death of a family member, the impending divorce of someone very close, the fear that the family may not be able to stay in their home, or the agony of having a parent who is not succeeding in this country and is contemplating returning to the native country. For example:

Ricardo: My grandmother died. That's why I haven't been concentrating.

Teacher: I am sorry about your Grandmother. Did she live here? I'm glad you told me--now I understand.

Ricardo: Ya! me too. I am sorry about my grandmother dying. I miss her . . . I'm sorry that I didn't learn anything because I was worried of my mother.

Students can also tell me in private about their concerns. The next entry was written by a Vietnamese student who was gifted in math. I had encouraged her to work with a special group of students preparing to represent the school in the city-wide math meet, but she felt ill at ease with them, because she was the only girl in the group. In her journal she explained the struggle she was having to decide whether to continue with the group and her frustration at not being a boy.

Tuyet: I have thinking about 3 day. If I don't go to special class I won't be able to know alot of about math . . . if I stay . . . I think they don't like me cause am not their friend and they smarter more than I do, do you think so? I can't help with this, I know it was my choice but I can't get which choice am I going to get, would you help me with all that problem?

I wish my mother was born me as a boy. I can't do any thing just exactly like other boy does because the girl can't play a lot of game. For example if the girl name A and other girl name B and they don't like each other so they are going tell other girl don't play with that girl she is bad so that part I don't like to be a girl but the boy doesn't like that and that is one reason I like to be a boy.

The written exchange also gives me a way to compliment a student for a particularly well-done bit of work, a positive behavior toward another student, or the fulfillment of a responsibility in the classroom. When a comment about a new piece of clothing is written in the privacy of the journal it is savored by the student, but does not make someone without a new piece of clothing feel that his own clothing is somehow not as good.

Cynthia: I had a little trobel with my homework. The word puzels I almost finished it, but Im missing a couple. I think this is going to be a fun week. . . .

Teacher: . . . I will help you with your homework today if you like. . . . You look so pretty with your blue earrings and blue sweater! It is good to have you back!

Since the journal provides a direct channel of communication with me, students know they can use it to express whatever feelings they are experiencing, no matter how negative. A student who is reprimanded in class may use the journal to deny guilt or to explain the reason for a particular action. If the student is very angry, the journal may become a place to vent that anger:

Benny: I have not read any of the stuff you wrote because I hate reading what you write to me. I am nearly done with the thing on the outline. I hate the outline. I made it the way you told me. Now it looks like a bird with a striped skirt on. I don't like it anymore. I used to like it when there was no dum feathers on it. Now it looks so dum.

Did you know that the same day I bought a record my brother broke it?

Benny ended the entry on a positive note. Frequently the writing has a cathartic effect, and by the end of the day the student who was so angry is busily erasing an earlier entry and writing a new one.

When students move, they typically experience ambivalent feelings about the move, and the intense emotions during this time are often expressed as hatred in the journal. This has happened under the same circumstances so many times that now I am fully aware that moving is a very difficult time, and I use our exchange to give affirmation.

Alex: . . . I wish I didn't move but my mom wants to move because my family is over there at montebello. today is allmost my last day of coming to this school. I hope tomorrow I have fun because its going to be my last day. . . . I hate you miss reed ranold didn't even stay in at recess. its a good thing Im leaving. I hope theres no teacher like you in motebello high school is ronald going to stay in for recess tomorrow because if he isn't he is going to get it.

Teacher: You were really angry. I'm glad you were willing to write it! That isn't a fun way to feel. How can we keep you from getting so upset? I'd be willing to help you plan a way.

I will miss you. I still wish you could stay here until school is out and then go to Montebello! Sometimes we can't do what we want to do.

When students use the journal to complain, it allows me to make clear my reasons for my actions, and usually clears up the problem very quickly.

Otis: Why dont you never pick me for a monator. you always pick Ron and Alexander.

Teacher: I picked you to help in the office today. I can pick you for a monitor when you act like a 6th grader. That means leaving your toys at home and doing 6th grade work.

Otis: thanks for peking me for a monator, I won't bring more toys to school. but can I have my rulbics cub back. PLEASE GIVE ME IT

Teacher: I haven't decided about your cube. I am sure you can work better in school and I think we need to decide how you can do better. Would sitting up closer to the front be helpful?

A means for resolving difficult classroom situations

The dialogue journal permits me to stay on top of problems that occur during the day and to work with the students involved without interrupting valuable class time. The following exchange shows how one difficult situation was resolved in the journal. The writer, a gang member who was older and more sophisticated than most of the other students in the class, was reluctant to go with us to the local Junior High for an orientation trip. When I asked him in the journal why he had not returned the permission slip to go, he privately told me why (see entry below). Understanding his predicament and realizing that to force him would be to create trouble for both of us, I found an alternative activity for him. Can you imagine the destruction of his image had I made him go and walk around the Junior High with a group of sixth graders when he had told his girl friends there that he attended a different Junior High?

Raoul: . . . you know why I don't want to go to Virgil becaus I had three girl friends there and they thought I was going to King J.H. and if they see me they are going to be very mad. I hope I don't have to go with you.

Teacher: No! I did not know that you had told anyone that you were in Junior High. I'm glad you told me. I understand the problem. If they saw you with the 6th graders they would know you had been giving them a line! I will see what I can arrange.

Raoul: Thanks a lot I really apprisiated. If I don't go were am I staying will you tell me please. I hope I don't have to do the dance with the sixth grade. Thank you.

Raoul: (later) . . . I hope you guys had a good time at Virgil thats to bad I couldn't go.

The next exchange comes from the journal of the same gang member. We were planning for the promotion ceremonies and he informed me that his "homeboys," fellow gang members, were planning to come. I had a chance to make it clear that his friends must not cause trouble, even though he rather hinted at that in the first part of the entry. Again, I could avoid trouble by knowing the situation ahead of time.

Teacher: Are your parents going to come to your promotion?

Raoul: No my parents arent going to come. some of my home boys are going to come because you don't know what may happen.

Teacher: What do you mean by "you don't know what may happen?" We've been doing this for years and nothing happens! We all have a good time and you get your promotion after the ceremony. So if anything happens during the ceremony--you may not get your promotion. I'm glad your friends want to come---but they can cause you a problem, too.

Raoul: No they wont theire already vets they have babies they wont start nothing. only if some one comes up to them. there just going to site down and watch.

Teacher: That's good! I hope they bring the babies! I really love little ones, don't you?

If I need to reprimand a student, I often do it in the journal, which avoids calling the problem to the attention of the whole class.

Teacher: Tuan feels you are pushing to get into the classroom and causing some problems. Will you watch yourself to see if that is happening?

Eddy: Yes I will watch myself to see if that is happening.

Sometimes a student writes about a problem that another student is having. I can offer some advice and enlist the student's help, a technique that is very effective. It gives the helper confidence that I understand the problem and that he is helping me to solve it.

Teacher: Luan is difficult--and I'm sure he makes you angry. We all must help him. He has not been in this country a year--he is trying hard to learn a new language which he does not understand. Sometimes he gets so angry that we think he looks funny--and if we laugh his feelings are hurt. Life is very, very hard for him. So anything you can do to help is very important.

Mark: OK next time I wont laugh at him when he gets angry even if he looks funny.

Sometimes we reason together about these situations and jointly find ways to avoid problems in the future:

Tuan: today at lunch Toan punch me because he was out and everybody said he was out he said he was not out and he got mad and he got the ball he would not give us the ball and they try to fight the ball away but Tom and me said to talk to him but he still did not want to give the ball and he keep saying bad words to everyone. Someone knock the ball out of him because he was going to waste our lunch. Toan ran after the ball I hold him and he hit me. I did not want to hit him or I would be in trouble too.

Teacher: How wise you are! It hurts to be hit, I know that! But hitting Toan only would make him more angry. He knew he was wrong and he is not to play at recess or noon all week.

Tuan: If I hit Toan back he would get more mad he is going to hit me and I'll hit him then it will turn out to be a fight. If someone fights in school they could get suspended.

Feedback like this is crucial in helping me to know that the student has internalized some of the processes of rational thinking that I have been introducing, and it encourages me to continue to promote these reasoning skills with the student.

I must caution that all students do not immediately take advantage of this channel of communication that is open to them. It may take a long time to assure a reluctant or even hostile student that it is all right to open up and communicate. This exchange comes from the journal of one such reluctant student. All of his entries in October, November, and December are very much like these. From my responses it is easy to see that I was getting frustrated.

Raoul: I wish we have a good day and I hope we have a good lunch time today and recess time I hope theres no trouble today.

Teacher: You were very angry with me this morning. You are not at school to play--even art is a way to learn. We measured and used a ruler to help us learn.

Raoul: I hope we have a good day today a good recess a good lunch time and a good playtime. I hope we wont get in any trouble.

Teacher: I am sorry you wrote this and did not keep your journal with you. You could help me so much if you would tell me in your journal why you are having trouble. I would like to make school easier for you by helping to solve some problems.

Raoul: I hope we have a nice day today a good recess time and a good lunch time. I am happy I am out of the gang and I dont have any more trouble with other gangs.

However, to my delight, later in the year, as a result of a variety of circumstances, he began to communicate with me. It saved us both a lot of agony, for in the writing we could discuss some issues that were important to him and I could deal with some problems he was having in school without causing him to lose his "macho" image in front of the other students. By the end of the year we were friends. Here is one particularly important conversation that we had in February.

Raoul: You could do nothing to help me becous I ron away from home so he wouldn't whip me. thursday I slept at my home boy's car and on Friday I slept in the some car i think ail go home today. And if he whips me I run again and that wornst be for five days it will be for a month. yesterday my homeboy told me you better go to school I told him alright then he told me you better go home to. then I said okey but if he whips me at all I'll run away again it wasn't fun running away from home. I didn't have fun at all. all the time I was thinking of my mom and my little brother. yesterday I was with my home boy at market Hughes. my mother and my father and my little brother came in. I douck down so they wouldn't see me me athey and didn't see me. right wene they were going to go in I went out the other doore and they didn't see me right wen they went in I ron to my home boys house.

As I hope I have made clear by opening up our journals to you, dialogue journal writing is the most important tool that I have for keeping my classroom flowing smoothly and for interacting daily with this richly diverse group of students. In fact, dialogue journals have become such an integral part of my teaching that I'm not sure I could function effectively in the classroom without them!

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